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THE LINCOLN TARIFF MYTH FINALLY  
DISPOSED OF

IN two notes published in this Journal, one in August, 1914, entitled "Abraham Lincoln on the Tariff: A Myth," and the other in February, 1915, entitled "Lincoln and the Tariff: A Sequel," I presented the results of an inquiry on the origin of a phrase about the tariff ascribed to Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> The phrase appeared in various forms. The familiar one was this: "If we purchase a ton of steel rails from England for twenty dollars, then we have the rails and England the money. But if we buy a ton of steel rails from an American for twenty-five dollars, then America has the rails and the money both." My conclusion, after following up various clues, was that the phrase originated with Robert G. Ingersoll. Tho it did not appear in Ingersoll's published writings until after the date of first ascription to Lincoln, the evidence indicated that it had been used by Ingersoll in his orations and lyceum speeches in such a way as to lead reporters, quite without design on Ingersoll's part, to attribute it to Lincoln.

Complete confirmation of this surmise has recently come to me through the obliging inquiries of Mr. Edward F. O'Neil of New York. Endeavors of my own to secure information from members of Ingersoll's family had been fruitless. Mr. O'Neil, however, has communicated with Ingersoll's surviving sister-in-law, Mrs. C. P. Farrell of New York, and gets from her the unequivocal statement that Ingersoll used the steel rail story as early as 1880. She refers to a speech made in Brooklyn, New York, in October, 1880, and reported to the *New York Herald* of October 31 of that year. He used it also in an interview in the *Republican* of Denver, Colorado, on January 17, 1884, and once more in a speech at the Metropolitan Opera House on June 29, 1888. The evidence seems to be complete. Ingersoll was the author of the phrase, and used it frequently. Only by accidental collocation with Lincoln's name did it come to be ascribed to the great president.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in the volume of collected essays on Free Trade, The Tariff and Reciprocity (1920).